A MARSHALL CAVENDISH PUBLICATION 49 IN FORTNIGHTLY PARTS

3 05 3X
$ 4.50

The Ancestral Trail

CYBER CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT DIMENSION

49 Malachit, Evil Incinerator

Plasma attack of the cyber warrior

Julek Heller

UK £1.75 IR £1.75
Australia $4.50 NZ $5.50 Singapore $4.90 Malaysia RM5.90 Malta £M1.50 South Africa R7.95

Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

The sound of lasers rang out as the dark-coloured cruisers pursued Richard and his two companions through the skies. "They're attacking!" Richard cried, struggling with the controls of his own cyber cruiser and returning fire as best he could.

It was no use. Richard soon realized that he was completely outnumbered. He tried to accelerate away from the dark cruisers but they were easily able to match his increase in speed. Richard did not know what to do next.

Suddenly, the cyber cruiser began to shake. It had been struck by an enemy laser beam. Flames and smoke belched from its rear. "Cyber cruiser hit," Robo confirmed in his usual robotic monotone. "Imperative. Advise immediate evacuation!"

Forced down

The cyber cruiser whined as Richard hastily steered it towards the ground. The fire at the back was raging out of control. If he did not land the craft quickly, Richard was sure they would all be roasted alive. The dark cruisers, meanwhile, continued their assault. Laser fire peppered the crippled craft.

The cruiser was just approaching the surface when Richard became aware of another problem. "We're going too fast," he groaned. "Hold tight!"

There was a tremendous crash as the flying machine hit the ground. Inside, the trio of adventurers was hurled against the cruiser's sides.

Screeching furiously, the flying machine rolled along the ground before finally grinding to a halt. Richard and his shaken companions quickly jumped out from the dented husk of the stricken craft. Smoke continued to bellow from its back section. Richard gazed at the cruiser, a look of worry on his face.

LAND-LOCKED

"What are we going to do now?" he asked in despair. "We've lost our only means of transport."

"Badvibe," Teeza sympathized.

"If cyber cruiser cannot be repaired, Chosen One must locate Omni piece on foot," Robo bluntly announced.

Richard did not have any time to ponder the robot's words. Without warning, there was a blast of searing light and heat that swept the three travellers off their feet. The cyber cruiser had exploded. Fragments of red-hot shrapnel hurtled through the air, barely missing Richard and his friends.

"I guess that we'll have to start walking," Richard said in resignation as he surveyed the buckled shards of smoking metal which were all that remained of the flying machine.

The Dark Robots

As they were about to set off, a droning noise from above caught Richard's attention. He looked up in dismay to see that the dark cruisers were coming in to land. The sky blackened and murky silhouettes of the evil craft stretched out over the charred landscape. Richard, Robo and Teeza began to run.

From the corner of his eye, Richard watched as a number of the cruisers landed and their hatches slid open.

Out of the cruisers stepped a group of dark-coloured robots. They were similar to the ones that Richard had seen earlier, piloting the flying saucers. The robots quickly spotted the fleeing figures and immediately set off in pursuit.

"Who are they?" Richard gasped.

"Dark Robots," Robo pronounced. "Elite guard of the Evil One. Dangerous."

"Not nicecool!" Teeza observed.

Richard and his fellow adventurers were no match for the speed of the Dark Robots. In the blink of an eye they were completely surrounded by their inhuman hunters. Richard looked in vain towards Robo's binary panel for guidance. Then one of the newcomers spoke in a grating voice:

"Raise your hands and keep your weapons in view," it ordered. "You are now in the control of the Evil One."

Richard's fingers reached for the handle of his sword.

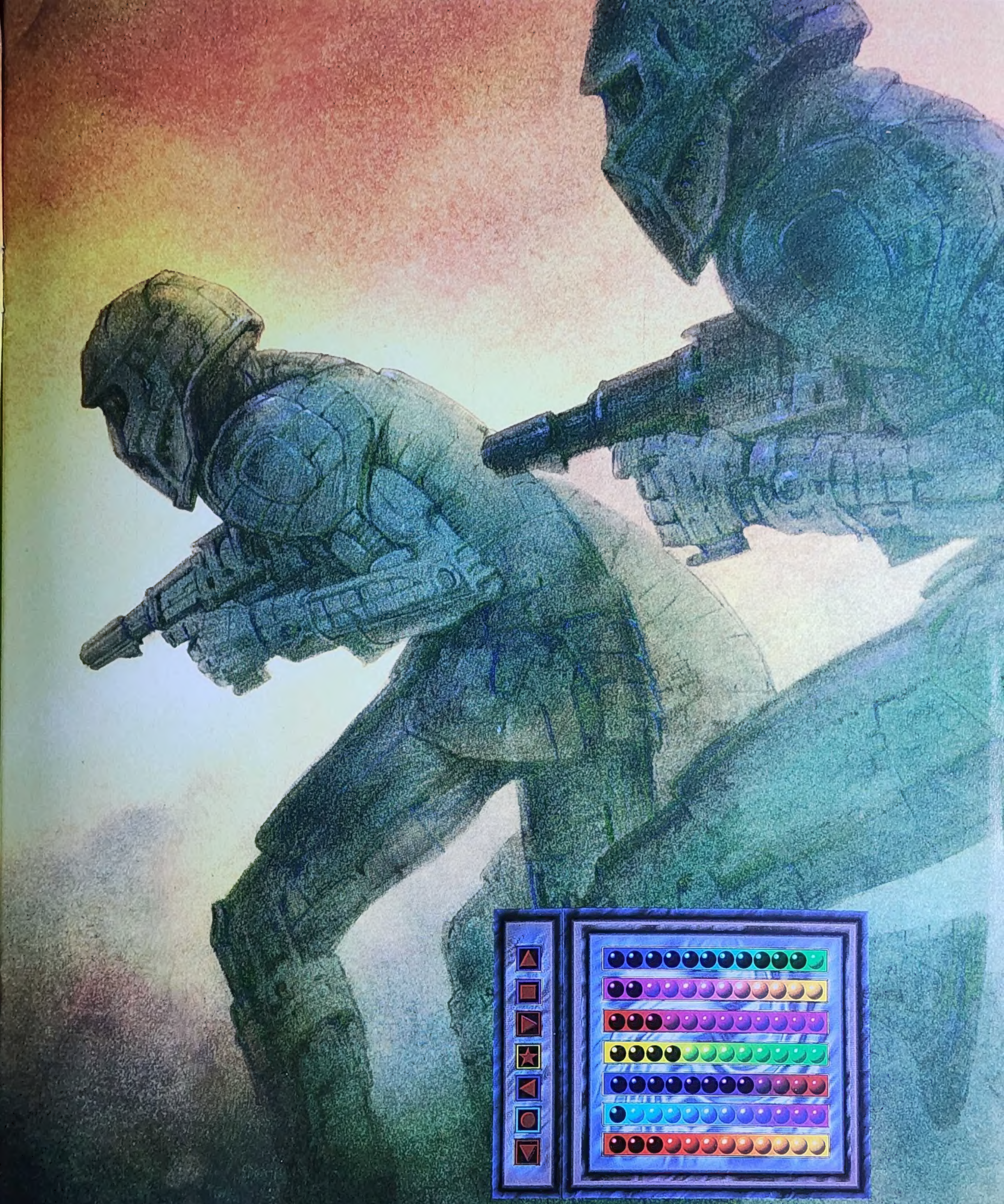
"Any attempt to disobey us will be met with death," the Dark Robot warned.

"Do as it says," Robo advised.

Helpless prisoners

"We have a long march ahead of us," said another of the robots. The trio were forced into a line, one behind the other. As many as twenty Dark Robots formed their escort. There was no chance of escape.

Head bowed, Richard began to walk. Although he had no idea where he was being taken, one thing was for sure: he was not going to like it.

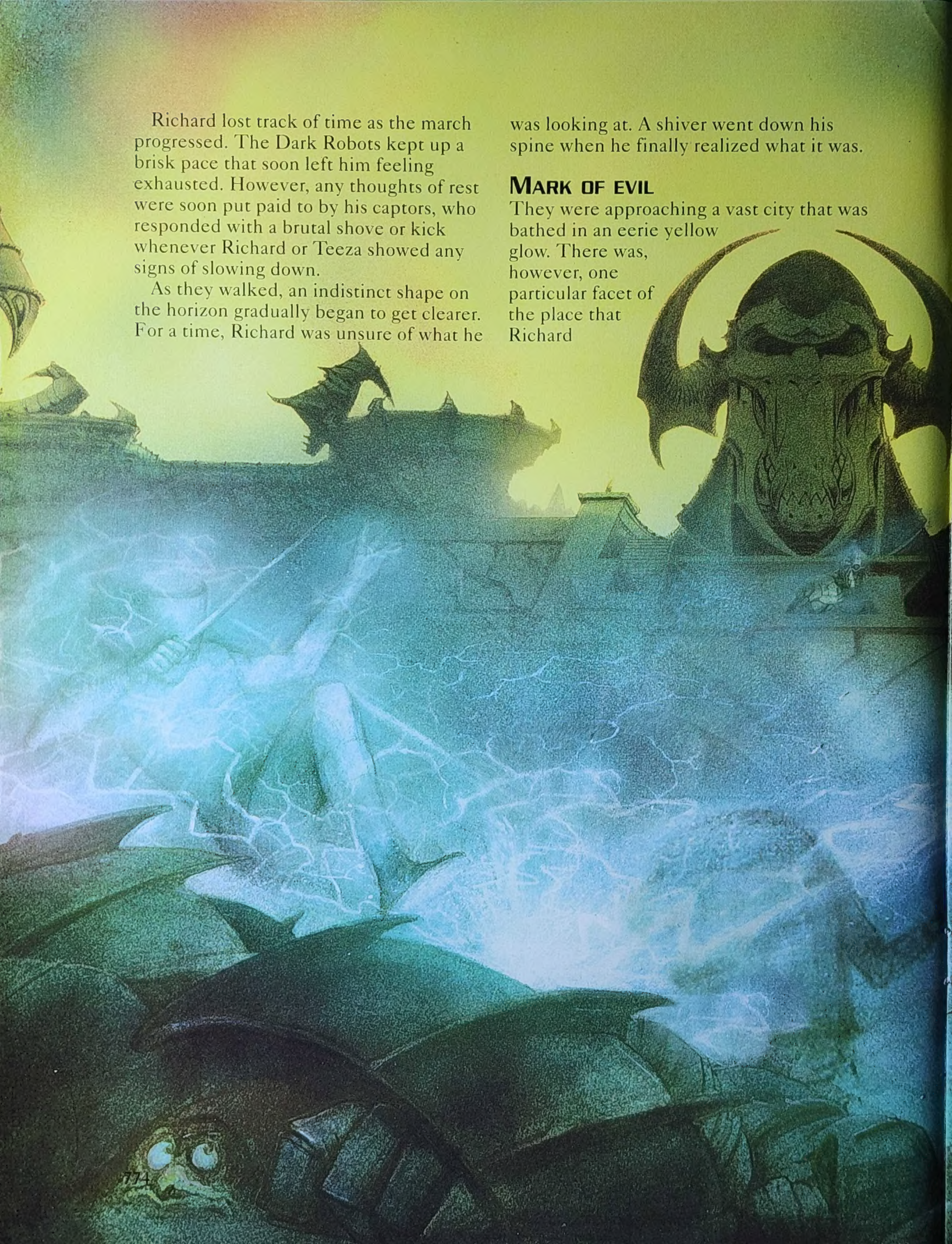


Richard lost track of time as the march progressed. The Dark Robots kept up a brisk pace that soon left him feeling exhausted. However, any thoughts of rest were soon put paid to by his captors, who responded with a brutal shove or kick whenever Richard or Teeza showed any signs of slowing down.

As they walked, an indistinct shape on the horizon gradually began to get clearer. For a time, Richard was unsure of what he was looking at. A shiver went down his spine when he finally realized what it was.

Mark of evil

They were approaching a vast city that was bathed in an eerie yellow glow. There was, however, one particular facet of the place that Richard



recognized all too well. "Look!" he stuttered. "That shape – it's the mask of the Evil One!"

The three entered the city and were taken into a huge amphitheatre. Inside, a crowd of Dark Robots was staring impassively at a circular arena. In the centre of the arena several armoured robots were waiting for Richard and the others. One carried a whip. "Time to die!" it scoffed, gleefully swinging the weapon.

The onlookers gave an excited roar as the whip whistled towards Richard, who drew his sword and held it before him.

Richard could see that he was not the only one under threat. Robo, too, was fighting for his life. The little robot fired his heat ray at his attacker. "Danger!" he warned. "Cyber gladiator attacking!"

Deadly conflict

Richard swung the sword and caught his assailant with the full of the blade. The gladiator gave a terrible cry of pain and slumped to the floor, dropping its whip. A stream of pale, syrupy liquid gushed from its wound. The robot's death throes were accompanied by those of one of its colleagues, who had succumbed to Robo's lasers in equally devastating fashion.

There was another tremendous roar from the robots in the audience. Seeking the cause of the hubbub, Richard saw that they were clearing a path for someone.

Richard shivered as a loud, hostile voice reverberated throughout the building. "How dare you destroy my robot gladiators?" it demanded. "The Evil One is tired of your meddling. Now you must face me!"

PLASMA DESTROYER

"Who's that?" Richard demanded of Robo.

"Malachit. Leader of Dark Robots."

"What are his powers?"

"Creature possesses plasma incinerator. One touch of plasma beam reduces its victims to atoms."

"If you want a job doing – do it yourself," Malachit exclaimed, drawing closer to Richard and Robo.

"What does he mean?" Richard gasped.

"We were supposed to be defeated by the robot gladiators. We have spoiled his entertainment," the robot replied.

A wave of fear washed over Richard's face as Malachit pulled something from a pouch on his back. The object he carried resembled a rifle. From its barrel came a bright beam of intense light that Malachit aimed directly towards Robo. It struck the robot with sickening force and engulfed Richard's companion.

"Primary shields in operation," Robo said. "Will not withstand another plasma beam assault."

"Leave the robot alone!" Richard bravely commanded. "It's me you want!"

"Indeed it is," Malachit smirked, turning away from Robo.

Holding his sword lamely before him, Richard looked around for help as the evil Malachit prepared to attack.

Another beam of light burst from his enemy's weapon. Richard quickly jumped to his left to avoid it. Malachit gave a grunt of outrage and took aim once more.

Not for the first time, Richard sought out Robo's binary panel – he knew it was his only hope of survival.

780

As Malachit attacked again, Richard found what he was looking for. Scampering away from the creature's second plasma beam, he attempted to decode the binary message.

Suddenly, Teeza's shrill voice rang out. "Richard," the little wigmat said, throwing something towards his friend, "take this – nicecool."

Richard picked up the object and started with surprise when he saw what it was.

NEW WEAPON

"Pixar's bipix!" Richard exclaimed. "Where did you get this from?"

Before Teeza could reply, another burst of energy from Malachit came veering towards Richard. It skimmed his arm, producing a shower of sparks. "That was too close for comfort!" he exclaimed.

Richard aimed the bipix at Malachit. Unfortunately, he had no idea how the two-pronged weapon worked. There did not appear to be any kind of trigger mechanism – nothing to push or pull. In desperation, he gave the bipix a hopeful squeeze. His gambit paid off. A steam of energy issued from the bipix and struck Malachit full on. The robot, bathed in light, gave a grunt of outrage. Loud gasps could be heard from the audience as Malachit evaporated away to nothing. He had been pixillated.

Richard looked at the smoking weapon that was resting limply in his hand. For a moment he said nothing. He was awestruck by the power he held in his grasp. Then he remembered that he owed his salvation to Teeza.

"How can I ever thank you?" he said to the wigmat.

"Some Turkish delight," the little animal answered innocently.

Robotic bedlam

Richard allowed himself a hearty laugh before the grim realization of his current predicament cut short his merriment. With the thrill of his triumph over Malachit, Richard had forgotten that he was still standing in the arena, surrounded by hundreds of extremely angry looking Dark Robots.

Expecting another attack at any moment, Richard held the bipix tightly in his fist. However, nothing moved towards him. Instead, a deep groan rose up from the watching robotic masses. The three companions looked at each other in confusion.

"What's happening?" Richard asked nervously.

Robo's sensors sprang into action. "Dark Robots' communication circuits have been damaged by demise of Malachit," he said.

Richard watched, mystified, as the robots began to charge frantically about.

Whenever one robot accidently bumped into another, there would be an exchange of blows. The Dark Robots were fighting

each other to the death!

"Dark Robots unable to tell the difference between friend and enemy," Robo observed wryly.

Richard craned his neck to follow the action. All he could see was a mass of flailing robotic limbs. Occasionally, flashes of laser fire lit up the amphitheatre.

Dark destruction

From centre of the arena, Richard was at an ideal vantage point to watch the drama unfurl. Gradually, as a result of the blows they were aiming at each other, the disturbed robots began to tear each other apart. Arms and legs were left trailing on the ground. Disembodied heads flew through the air like coconuts at a fairground shy.

Before long the numbers in the audience began to dwindle. Eventually, there was only one robot left standing. It walked around the outer edge of the arena, aimlessly throwing punches and kicks at the carcasses of its former colleagues.

"Do you think it's safe to leave now?" Richard asked.

"Affirmative," Robo replied.

"Is the last Omni piece around here?".

"Have scanned area with sensors," Robo replied. "There is no trace of Omni piece in city."

"So, we move on," Richard sighed.

The trio left the cyber amphitheatre and slowly trudged off in a northerly direction. "The Omni piece has to be close," Richard insisted, growing impatient.

"Has to be..." Teeza agreed.

They passed through the gates of the city and walked on until the towering mask of the Evil One began to recede into the distance.

"I hope I never have to go there again," Richard said in relief.

RAIN OF TERROR

The sky was growing darker when Richard caught sight of something ahead of them. He could not be sure what it was, but he was fairly certain that he was looking at some kind of building.

"Could the Omni piece be there?" he asked Robo. Before his companion could answer, there was a sound from above. Richard looked up. Horrified, he saw a rain of deadly spikes rapidly descending from the skies. "Run!" he shouted.

It was too late. The spikes were upon them. "Badvibe," Teeza groaned.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

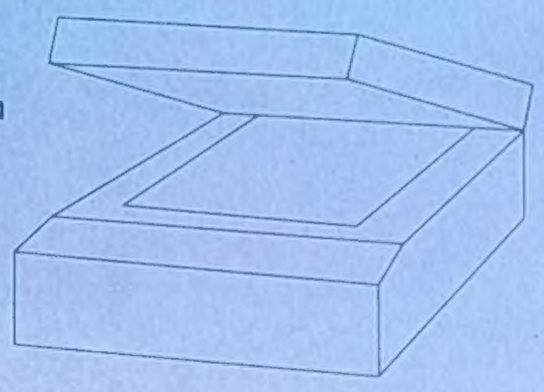
Shoomi and Shoobi are still hot on the heels of Richard and Robo. They are hidden somewhere in this issue. See if you can spot them in under three minutes.

In issue 48 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 754

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard, Robo and Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?



In the last issue a scanner was hidden on page 767. Scanners are electronic devices that enable photographs, drawings or words to be inputted onto a computer hard disk. There they can be manipulated in drawing or paint programs. Some scanners use special OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software. This enables the computer to 'read' scanned text and translate it into word processor format.

▶ Competition Details

In some issues you will find letter blocks. Cut these out and keep them safe. When you have collected 26 letter blocks, you will be given a clue which will help you form them into a sentence that reveals the fatal flaw in the Cyber Dimension. The prize for the competition is a super Sega Mega Drive, complete with a copy of the great new role-playing game Shining Force.

Details on how to enter the competition will be given in a later issue.

NB The competition will be open to residents of the UK and Eire only.

HOW TO CONTINUE YOUR COLLECTION

Most of our customers prefer to collect issues from their newsagent by placing a regular order. To help you collect THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL we are pleased to offer the following services:

DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR £1.75). NB We offer a full subscription service in the UK. Issues are sent to your home POST FREE and will be dispatched to arrive on the day of publication.

SUBSCRIPTION
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR£1.75). NB We require a minimum order of 10 issues for subscription. POSTAGE IS FREE. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

MISSING ANY ISSUES?
If you have missed any issues in your collection, we can supply them through our Back Numbers Dept. NB Orders are subject to availability.

BACK NUMBERS
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR£1.75) including p&p. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL BACK NUMBERS.

In the following countries, services are available as in the UK:

AUSTRALIA
Back Numbers Send cover price plus 95¢ p&h per issue to Gordon & Gotch Ltd, PO Box 290, Burwood, Victoria 3125.
Slipcase Send $13.95. Make cheques payable to Gordon & Gotch Ltd.

NEW ZEALAND
Back Numbers Send cover price to Gordon & Gotch (NZ) Ltd, PO Box 584, Auckland.
Slipcase Send $17.95.

MALTA
Back Numbers and Slipcase Available through your newsagent.

SLIPCASE

You can order the slipcase to preserve your copies of THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL. The slipcase holds 26 issues and costs £5.95 (IR£5.95) including p&p. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL SLIPCASE.

HOW TO PAY
Payment should be made by cheque or postal order (made payable to Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd) to: MARSHALL CAVENDISH, MARLBOROUGH ROAD, ALDBOURNE, MARLBOROUGH, WILTSHIRE SN8 2HP. Telephone 0672 40776.

©Marshall Cavendish Ltd 1994 From an original idea by Frank Graves. Published by Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd, 119 Wardour Street, London W1V 3TD. Colour by Bright Arts Ltd. Typeset output by Litho Link Ltd. Printed in Great Britain.

In Issue 50

Robo,
Robotic Betrayer

Richard finds the final Omni piece and celebrates the end of his quest. However, before he can return home he must face the wrath of one of his closest allies.

plus

- ▶ 4 more **Cyber Power** cards
- ▶ More **Techscan** cards to add to your collection

Coming in Issue 51

Vileeon, Cyber Judge

Captured by the Dark Robots again. Richard is placed on trial in a cyber court. An evil robotic judge holds Richard's fate in his hands.

plus

▶ More **Cyber Power** cards ▶ 2 more **Techscan** cards.

ISBN 0-7485-4514-X
9 780748 545148